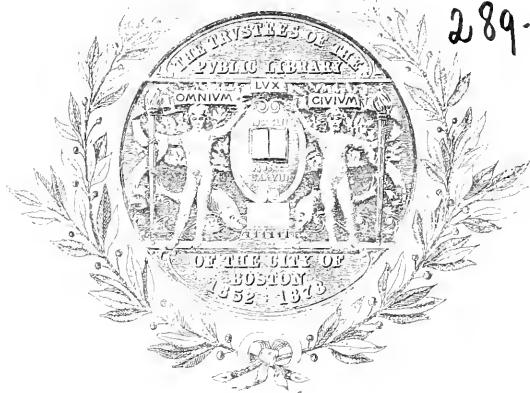


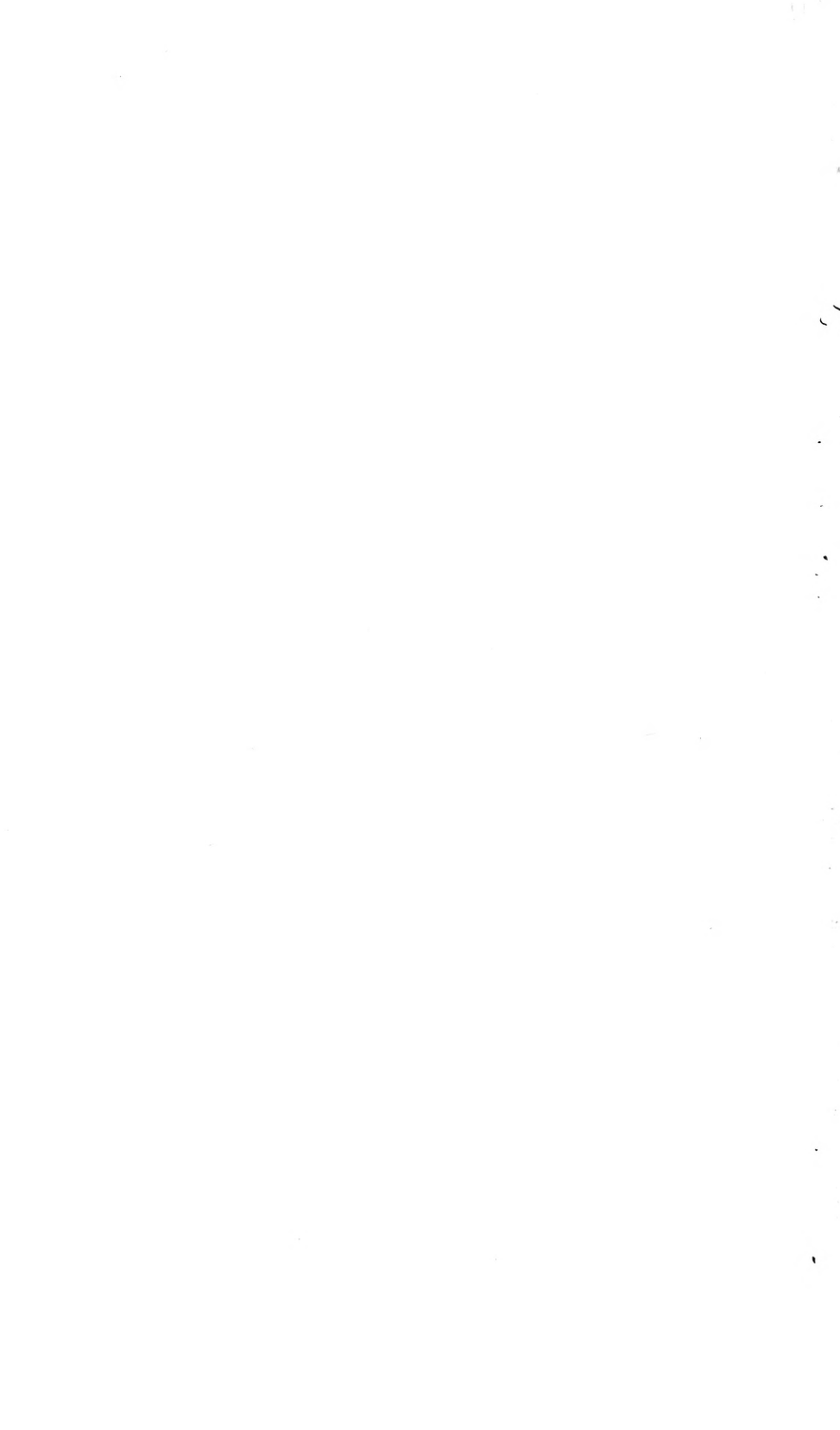
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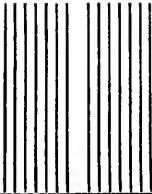
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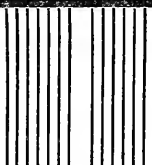
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Wartime Employment Of Boys and Girls Under 18



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Wartime Employment of Boys and Girls Under 18

A NATIONAL VIEW

The employment of children and young people under 18 years of age is increasing at a tremendous rate. The demands that these young people leave school to work on farms, in stores, in service industries, and in factories are growing daily. High wages offered are exerting a strong pull in this same direction. Thousands have left school for work and other thousands are working in addition to attending school, many in unsuitable employment and for long hours. Fewer children are enrolling in high school, and many who enroll drop out in the middle of their courses to go to work. Others have left for employment even before completing the elementary grades. At the same time that our children and youth are cutting short their education for employment, the Selective Service System is reporting that scores of thousands of the young men of this country have been found to be unequipped to enter the armed forces because of elementary educational deficiencies—a serious loss to the country's military strength when it is most needed.

Wholesale increases in employment of young persons under 18 mean curtailment of schooling at the very time when more adequate and universal education of youth should be recognized as a war measure and given its due priority. Modern wars are won in industrial workshops and scientific laboratories. The country needs educated youth to do its war planning and skilled technicians to carry on both war and civilian production.

The direct causes of the increasing movement from school to work, which is being accelerated as the 18- and 19-year-old boys are drafted for the armed forces, are the new employment opportunities opened up by the production of war materials and the drawing off of employed adults and elder youth from agriculture and civilian industries into the war plants and into military service. But another important and less well-recognized factor is that the schools are an easy and tempting reservoir to tap for new workers. It is often much more difficult to recruit workers from minority groups, women, and older persons not normally in the labor market, than it is to call

upon school children—a group that can be found all together in one place, a group naturally eager for new experiences and for what seems an exciting part in the war effort, a group inexperienced in employment relationships and often willing to accept any wages offered. Since Pearl Harbor this “easy way” has been taken only too often, in spite of its dangerous implications. There has been no Nation-wide, balanced program to avoid waste of this irreplaceable source of future manpower.

The President in his radio speech of October 12, 1942, recognized “grown” boys and girls as one of the sources of manpower but also cautioned that they should be used where “reasonable.” In connection with the President’s suggestion that plans be worked out to enable high-school students “to take some time from their school year and to use their summer vacations to help farmers raise and harvest their crops, or to work in the war industries,” he referred to “older students” and said, “This does not mean closing schools and stopping education.” But up to the present time the use of school children in employment in this country has often failed to follow these suggestions. In many cases schools have been closed for weeks at a time and education disrupted; many younger children have been employed when older youth could have been made available. Much of this employment has not been “reasonable” from the point of view of the best interests of youth or of the Nation or from the long-range point of view of winning both the war and the peace.

To reach the President’s objective, a clear view must be taken of the varied contributions that these young people should make to the Nation’s welfare. They must be regarded primarily as the reservoir for the trained minds and bodies of tomorrow. This is not inconsistent with participation in the war-production effort by many of the more mature, provided this participation is guided and supervised so as to give them experience of some educational value and a feeling of direct contribution to wartime needs. Both their schooling and their employment must be carefully directed so as to conserve their educational opportunities and protect them from undue physical strain and work hazards. As the President on another occasion has said: “All our energies at the present must be devoted to winning the war. Yet winning the war will be futile if we do not throughout the period of its winning keep our people prepared to make a lasting and worthy peace.”¹

¹ Letter to Dr. Everett Case, President of Colgate University, September 10, 1942, on the occasion of the beginning of Dr. Case’s term as president and the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the university.

FACING THE FACTS

How many young workers between 14 and 18 years of age are employed?

No count of children and young persons at work has been made since early in 1940, when the census showed somewhat less than 900,000 boys and girls between 14 and 18 years of age employed—209,347 of 14 and 15 and 662,967 of 16 and 17 years.² The only recent information is from rough estimates based on sample trends since that time, which indicate a total of around 2 million in January 1943, and around 3 million in the preceding July, during the school vacation period. Of these, about a fourth, according to the same rough estimates, were in the younger age group, that is, 14 or 15 years of age.

Reports of employment and age certificates, issued in most States for children going to work, give clues to the upward trend since 1940. It must be borne in mind, however, that they show only the numbers obtaining certificates during a given period and not the number actually at work at any particular time. Though they do not tell the whole story, they indicate that in the year 1940, at the very least, more than 250,000 minors between 14 and 18 years of age, and in 1941 more than 500,000, entered their first full-time or part-time jobs. During the first 6 months of 1942 these young workers were joined by more than 50,000 children 14 and 15 years old and more than 275,000 young persons 16 and 17 years old. Incomplete reports for July to December 1942 already show a total of more than 300,000 minors between 14 and 18 years of age entering full-time or part-time employment during this 6-month period; about 60,000 were 14 or 15 years of age.

The number of boys and girls of these ages who obtained certificates for full-time or part-time jobs in 1941 was more than double the 1940 total, the increase for the 16- and 17-year-olds being 132 percent and for those of 14 and 15 years, 77 percent. The number between 14 and 18 years of age obtaining certificates in the first 6 months of 1942 was about 60 percent greater for both 14- and 15-year-old and 16- and 17-year-old workers than in the corresponding period of 1941.

The incomplete reports for the last 6 months of 1942 show that more than three times as many children 14 and 15 years of age left school for work in those months as in the same period of 1940 and also that more than three times as many took vacation or part-time jobs. In the 16-

² These figures do not give a complete picture of the extent of employment of boys and girls between 14 and 18 years of age. The fact that the census was taken in early spring inevitably resulted in the omission of many children of the ages covered who are regularly employed in agriculture. Although some commercial crops are under cultivation as early as the last week in March—the census date—the majority of children who engage in industrialized agriculture are not working at that date. Also, it is probable that some part-time and self-employed child workers were not counted as employed.

and 17-year-old group four times as many boys and girls took full-time or part-time jobs in this 6-month period as in the corresponding period of 1940.

These certificate figures, striking as they are, do not give a complete picture even of the flow of children and young persons between 14 and 18 years of age into full-time and part-time employment. Many go to work without obtaining certificates, either because the law does not require a certificate for the occupation they enter or because the employer does not demand the certificate required by law. Certificates are not usually required for work in domestic service or agriculture. In some States much, if not all, nonfactory work outside school hours and during vacation is outside the scope of the certificate law, and a few States have no State certificate system even for 14- and 15-year-old children. For minors of 16 and 17 about half the States do not require certificates, although administratively they are issued on request.

Another important limitation on these certificate figures is that they reflect only legal employment of the young workers between 14 and 18 years of age. In all parts of the country State officials who enforce labor laws have been reporting that illegal employment of minors has increased greatly. This is likely to happen under present conditions when jobs are easy for children to find, when employers are eager for workers, and when law-enforcement officials are much overworked.

How many children under 14 years of age are employed?

No one knows how many children under 14 years of age are at work. The census of 1940, for the first time since 1870, did not enumerate workers under 14 years old. Employment-certificate figures do not include them. Nevertheless, it is obvious from reports from all over the country and from general observation that many children younger than 14 are in fact engaged in street trades and industrialized agriculture, where their employment is subject to comparatively little legal restriction, and that large numbers are employed in stores and in other miscellaneous kinds of work. There can be little doubt that the number of children under 14 years of age engaged in agriculture last summer reached into hundreds of thousands. Under most State laws the employment of children under 14 is prohibited in factory and commercial occupations. However, State officials report many instances of illegal employment. Federal inspectors under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 have been finding violations of the act in the employment of these young children. Of the approximately 4,000 minors found employed contrary to the child-labor provisions of the act during the year ended June 30, 1942, nearly 1,200 were under 14 years of age.

Are more boys and girls going to work?

Although a great many girls between 14 and 18 years of age are being employed, the working boys of these ages predominate and the proportion of boys has been increasing. Of the 16- and 17-year-old minors who obtained first regular certificates³ in 1941, 59 percent were boys as compared with 56 percent in 1940 and 54 percent in 1939. In the corresponding group of 14- and 15-year old minors, the proportion of boys is larger and has increased more rapidly; it was 67 percent in 1941, 58 percent in 1940, and 51 percent in 1939. Many more boys than girls are going to work during vacation and outside school hours; in 1941 only about a third of the minors of 16 and 17 and a tenth of those of 14 and 15 years were girls.⁴

What kinds of work are these boys and girls doing?

Some young persons 16 and 17 years of age are going into plants producing war materials. For example, in aircraft factories they are doing assembly work or are working in sheet-metal shops; in shipyards they are doing subassembly work or are working in the sheet-metal shops, moldlofts, or machine shops. In other war plants they are undertaking a variety of jobs. In larger numbers boys and girls of these ages are working in factories producing textiles, wearing apparel, shoes and other leather products, electrical equipment, and all sorts of metal products, as well as various kinds of machinery. However, although the proportion entering manufacturing industries is increasing, the majority of 16- and 17-year-old workers are probably employed in nonmanufacturing industries—in wholesale establishments and warehouses; in retail stores as sales clerks, errand boys, stock boys, and shipping clerks; in offices; in laundries; as telegraph messengers and telephone operators; as ushers and cashiers in places of amusement; in hotels and restaurants; and as clerical workers in many industries. Many others, especially in the summer months, are employed on farms.

The 14- and 15-year-old children find their way into more miscellaneous types of employment. They are doing delivery and errand work; clerking in stores; working as busboys or counter boys in lunchrooms or as soda jerkers in drug stores; helping in filling stations and garages; doing miscellaneous clerical jobs; working as curb hops, as caddies, as pin boys in bowling alleys; delivering and selling newspapers and working in other street trades; and doing housework and odd jobs in private homes. Like the 16- and 17-year-old boys and girls,

³ These certificates permitted the minor to leave school and take full-time employment, but some of the minors may in fact have continued in school and worked only outside school hours or in vacation.

⁴ Employment-certificate reports, upon which this information is based, are incomplete for domestic service, in which more girls than boys of these ages are employed, and for agriculture, in which more boys than girls of these ages are employed.

large numbers are engaged in cultivating and harvesting fruits and vegetables in industrialized agriculture. Children under 16 years of age found illegally employed by inspectors under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 included workers engaged in preparing fruits and vegetables and seafood in canning, packing, and freezing establishments and operating machines in other manufacturing plants; assembling, wrapping, and packing; poultry picking; and doing industrial home work such as shelling nuts, caning chairs, making flowers, and stringing tags.

What proportion of these boys and girls are going into manufacturing industries?

Of the minors 16 and 17 years of age who obtained regular employment or age certificates in 1941 according to reports received by the Children's Bureau, 41 percent went into manufacturing industries, as compared with 36 percent in 1940. Comparatively few 14- and 15-year-old children obtain certificates for regular factory work because the 16-year minimum-age standard set by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 affects productive work in all establishments producing goods for interstate commerce, and most manufacturing establishments fall in this class. Thus, under the Federal act, only work in establishments producing no goods for interstate commerce and a small amount of nonproductive work in interstate factories are legal for children of 14 and 15 years. Moreover, 15 States have established a basic minimum age of 16 for work in factories, at least during school hours. As a result, only a small percentage of the children of 14 and 15 who left school for work (exclusive of newsboys) went into work for manufacturing establishments—3 percent in 1940 and 5 percent in 1941. The corresponding figure for those going to work during vacation or outside school hours is 2 percent in both years.

Are boys and girls working in dangerous occupations or under harmful conditions?

Many examples may be cited of fatal or disabling injuries that occur to boys and girls under 18 at work in occupations that demand experience and maturity of judgment.

A 13-year-old boy employed on odd jobs in a bakery started to clean a dough-mixing machine while it was running. His arm caught in the machinery and he died as a result of the injuries received.

A 14-year-old boy was killed as the result of an accident when he was helping to operate a delinting machine in a cotton-ginning plant. His leg was struck by a part of the machine and he was knocked into the machine, where the saws caught his arm and mangled it and cut into his side.

A 15-year-old boy on the night shift in a laundry tried to extract a tangled sheet from an operating mangle. He was drawn into the mangle, his right arm was torn off above the elbow, and his leg was fractured.

A 16-year-old farm hand fell asleep at 4 o'clock in the morning while he was driving a truck to market. In the resulting accident he was severely injured.

A 16-year-old boy who was a helper on a coal truck tried to jump onto the truck while it was moving. In doing so, his foot slipped and he fell under the rear wheel, which crushed his head and arm and caused instant death.

An inexperienced 17-year-old boy working as a laborer in a bituminous coal mine was loading a truck underground at a coal conveyor in the mine. The conveyor safety belt, which was too long and extended beyond the guard, caught on the boy's glove. Before the motor could be stopped, his left middle finger was twisted off at the second joint.

More and more boys and girls attending school are going to work at part-time jobs. Most of them are 16- and 17-year-old high-school students, though many are 14 or 15 years of age and some even younger. The result in many cases is that the pupil's health is impaired, and he either fails in his school work, or, discouraged with lack of school progress and lured by the pay envelope, he drops out of school. Examples may be multiplied from one end of the country to the other.

In one city a survey of 3 high schools shows from 31 to 41 percent of the school enrollment employed. The majority are 16 and 17 years old but many are younger. In one boys' school in this city about 2,000 are employed—269 in factory jobs, 211 in clerical work, 616 in sales jobs, 459 as delivery boys, and the rest chiefly as pin boys, ushers in theaters, garage helpers, and so forth. Nearly 400 are working 35 or more hours a week—257 of them 40 or more hours a week—in addition to carrying school work.

A 14-year-old boy in the ninth grade goes to school from 8:15 or 8:30 a. m. until 2 p. m.; sells candy in a theater from 2 p. m. to 10 p. m. 6 days a week (with an hour off for supper). On one day he gets off from work at 6. His total hours of work are 46; with school hours added, his part-time and school work program amounts to 73½ hours a week.

A 13-year-old girl works afternoons and evenings in a restaurant with a total of 56 hours a week of school and work.

A 14-year-old boy in the seventh grade works as delivery boy on a bakery truck on school days from 5:30 to 8:00 a. m.; attends school from 9:45 to 3:15 p. m. On Saturdays he works from 5:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m., with three-quarters of an hour off. His wages are \$9 a week.

A 13-year-old boy in the eighth grade sets pins in a bowling alley at a wage of \$13 a week. He works from 6 to 11 p. m. on school days and from 1 p. m. to 12 midnight on Saturday and Sunday, with a half-hour off.

Bowling alleys are employing children from 12 years of age and up until midnight or even until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The result is weariness and poor work in school, truancy, and, too often, delinquency.

What of needed educational opportunity?

Even before the war equal educational opportunity—the democratic ideal—was far from attainment. According to the 1940 census, 1 out of every 8 of the adult population 25 years of age and over had had less than 5 years of schooling. Ten percent of the children of the country 14 and 15 years of age and 5 percent of those between 7 and 14 years of age were not attending school in March 1940. Among the rural farm children the average out of school was 18 percent for the 14- and 15-year-olds and 9 percent for those between 7 and 14 years of age. In some parts of the country the proportion of children out of school was much higher—among the rural farm children in some States, 23 percent or more for the 14- and 15-year-old group and 12 percent or more for the younger group.

Great Britain has recognized education as an integral part of the war effort and has increased its appropriations for public education during these war years. Many British educators echo the regret of Prime Minister Churchill that England did not raise the age for leaving school (14 years) to 16 at the close of the first World War, so that better-trained youth would now be available for the war effort.

What has happened in the field of child-labor and school-attendance laws?

Though there has been some pressure to repeal or modify protective provisions of child-labor and school-attendance laws, serious relaxation of standards was for the most part prevented in 1941 and 1942. In fact, in Louisiana and Puerto Rico notable advances were made in child-labor legislation in 1942. Moreover, although a number of States passed legislation under which hours of labor and certain other standards may be relaxed during the war, the majority of these laws provide that such relaxation shall not apply to minors under 18.

In the field of Federal legislation the minimum age for employment of girls under the Public Contracts Act⁵ was reduced from 18 to 16 by a ruling of the Secretary of Labor under authority given her by the act, under safeguards strictly limiting the conditions of labor and the kinds of work permitted for girls of 16 and 17. This ruling results in a minimum age of 16 for both boys and girls, which is the basic minimum age for employment under the Fair Labor Standards Act

⁵ This act (the Walsh-Healey Act) applies to employment in the production of goods for the Federal Government under contracts in excess of \$10,000.

of 1938. The Secretary's action was taken at the request of the Federal departments most concerned with the war, and its purpose was to prevent retardation of essential production.

In State laws relaxations in 1941 and 1942 related chiefly to the employment of minors in the commercialized amusement areas—as, for example, in bowling alleys. In some States special provisions were made for release of children from school for work in agriculture, though in a few instances for limited periods and under safeguards giving administrative control to agencies concerned with the welfare of youth. Other exceptions that were allowed lengthened hours of work or relaxed night-work prohibitions for 16- and 17-year-old minors.

Much stronger demands for weakening legislative protection for young workers are evident this year, when most of the State legislatures are in session. For the most part the bills so far introduced deal with work in agriculture and bowling alleys, but some would lower standards for a wider range of employment. On the other hand, in a few States bills raising standards have been introduced.

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

How can wise plans be made for participation of youth in war-time employment?

Positive action must be initiated through State and local groups that represent both the forces primarily interested in the welfare of youth and the forces primarily interested in production needs and the contribution of young persons to those needs. These groups should plan and carry out definite programs for conserving the health and educational opportunities of youth under 18, while at the same time satisfying legitimate demands for their assistance in meeting labor needs in a particular area. Programs must be developed to meet existing situations, and future emergencies must be foreseen and planned for. Only an alert and aroused public opinion, coordinated through such group action, will recognize and successfully combat the dangers inherent in the present trends.

What principles should guide programs for participation of youth in wartime employment?

The following principles will provide a general foundation for comprehensive planning to guide the contribution of children and young persons to the war program through employment:

1. *Programs must be planned on the basis of the particular needs of young persons at different ages.*—In general, the need of children under 14 years of age is for complete freedom for healthful physical, mental, and social growth, and their part in the war effort should be

limited to suitable tasks at home and suitable group activities as volunteers under careful supervision. They should not be considered as part of the hired labor force. For children of 14 and 15 also, education and physical and social development are primary needs. If they are to be employed, their work should be only in carefully selected occupations and under conditions that properly protect them. Many young persons between 16 and 18 can make their best contribution to the war program by continuing their schooling. Those with special aptitudes and capacities must be encouraged to continue their training in order to meet more effectively their military or civic responsibilities. Others who will gain most by assuming the role of wage earner and worker or whose employment is found essential in the war program should be guided into occupations that are suited to their age and capacity and in which they can make the greatest contribution with the least danger to their health and well-being.

2. *Demands for these young workers must be carefully scrutinized.*—This scrutiny is particularly important in cases of appeals to the schools for release of pupils for employment. The comparative importance of the work they may perform if they curtail their schooling and of the education and training they will forfeit must be weighed. A careful check should be made with agencies responsible for supplying workers to see whether other sources of labor can and should be used—for instance, men and women in minority groups, women not normally in the labor market—or whether the need should be met by appeal to consumers to sacrifice nonessential services. Children have frequently been employed, particularly the younger ones, without consideration of whether their services were actually needed, whether they were desired merely as a cheap and readily available labor supply, or whether other sources of labor could be used.

3. *The health and safety of all employed workers between 14 and 18 years of age must be protected.*—This is particularly essential in view of increases in industrial accidents and in view of the stress and pressure of present industrial conditions. Many young persons under 18 years of age are entering jobs formerly filled by mature, older workers. They are still in adolescence and comparatively immature in emotion and intelligence. They are more susceptible to industrial accidents and probably to industrial poisons than older, more experienced persons. Workers 14 and 15 years of age need the greater safeguards, of course, but boys and girls of 16 and 17 entering industry for the first time are also in need of protective measures. In the interests of production as well as of the workers it is important that their physical well-being should be safeguarded in every possible way, and that they be given safe jobs. Particular attention should be given to limitation on hours, to provision for meal and rest periods, and to avoidance of night employment.

4. *Conditions of part-time work for school children must be controlled.*—Employment of school children in part-time work is already widespread and is increasing rapidly. In some places school programs are being adjusted to shorten the school period and permit children to take jobs. Combined work and school programs if properly safeguarded may offer an opportunity to young persons to help in essential production or community service and at the same time keep on with their education. But these programs must be carefully planned and directed if harm to the child is to be avoided.

Surveys in many parts of the country show that this planning and direction has often been insufficient or entirely absent and that thousands of children are undertaking a burden of combined school and work far too heavy for them. For instance, in 9 junior or senior high schools in 4 eastern cities, a recent survey showed that in addition to children employed in street trades and domestic service,⁶ nearly 5,000 children out of a total enrollment of approximately 17,000 were employed after school hours. Of these working students, 1,003 were under 16 and working in occupations prohibited to children of this age by State law. Children from 11 to 18 years of age were employed in all sorts of enterprises, working 6 and 7 days a week, 40, 50, and 60 hours a week. Night work was common—627 children were employed until 10 p. m. or later and 307 until midnight or later. From many parts of the country have come reports of young schoolboys setting up pins in bowling alleys until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. A school official in a Western State reports requests from employers for school children to work on shifts of 4 to 8 hours that require them to be on duty as late as 12 or 1 o'clock at night. Another example reported to the Children's Bureau is that of a 15-year-old boy working 35 hours a week up to 10 and 11 p. m., as an usher in a movie theater, making a 60-hour week of school and work combined.

The amount and kind of work a high-school student can safely do in addition to his school work is limited, and his unrestricted contribution to a job may easily cost the Nation far more than it is worth in waste of his energies and in damage to a future citizen. Desirable limitations on part-time employment of youth in school may vary with conditions, but in all cases opportunity should be maintained for a full night's rest, for adequate recreation, and for safeguarding educational progress.

5. *The widespread use of school pupils for supplying emergency labor needs requires that the State and the community assume responsibility for the conditions under which these pupils are recruited and employed.*—This assumption of responsibility by the community is particularly essential in the programs for employing children in the cultivation and harvesting of crops, in order to insure that these

⁶ Employment in these occupations outside school hours is not covered by the child-labor law of the State where the survey was made.

young workers are adequately safeguarded and that they make the most efficient possible contribution to production in areas where they are needed. Experience during 1942 shows the need for careful advance community planning of programs for the recruitment, placement, and supervision of these young workers, for whom little protection has been provided by law. Leadership from State and community agencies is needed to insure this planning and the observance of standards that will safeguard adequately the health and welfare of young workers drawn on to meet shortages in farm labor. Strict enforcement of such provisions of the school-attendance, child-labor, and other labor laws as are applicable to the work is fundamental.

6. *All wartime programs for employment of children and young people under 18 years of age should be conducted with due regard to child-labor and school-attendance standards established by law.*—These standards are of special value in this period of rapid recruitment of new sources of labor as a guide in distinguishing what is proper employment for boys and girls from what will be detrimental to them because of their youth. In the long run these standards also make for efficiency in production.⁷ Both school-attendance and child-labor laws should be actively enforced.

7. *Growing pressure for the break-down of standards of child-labor and compulsory school-attendance laws through legislation or administrative action must be intelligently met.*—Pressure should be foreseen and met by advance planning and by intelligent analysis of legal standards in relation to the conditions of work for which the children are wanted and to the problems that the standards were designed to meet. Well-directed plans are needed to combat confusion and thoughtless action. If careful study does not disclose any practicable alternative to modification of existing standards, the modifications adequate to meet the need may often be worked out within the framework of the law. Any relaxations should be limited to the duration of the particular emergency, and safeguards and adequate administrative controls should be provided.

8. *If child-labor and school-attendance laws are to be more than a dead letter, law-enforcement agencies, already depleted and over-worked, must be strengthened.*—Along with the current increase in the employment of children and youth have come widespread reports of employment contrary to law, particularly of children under 16 years of age. Sufficient funds must be appropriated for effective administration of child-labor and school-attendance laws in the States commensurate with the task created by the greatly increased employment

⁷ Information on legislation may be obtained from the State departments of labor and from the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor.

of young persons under 18 years of age, and qualified staff necessary to effective administration must be provided.

9. *Children and young persons themselves must realize that education is itself a patriotic duty.*—Children and parents should be brought to understand that in doing their school work well, these young people are upholding the American tradition just as surely as if they were fighting in northern Africa or making guns and bullets in a munitions factory. Young people's patriotic service is to develop to the fullest degree their capacities for citizenship in a democratic world. At the same time they may be called upon to participate in voluntary community programs in which their services are vitally needed.

What guideposts point the way to wise participation of young persons under 18 in wartime employment?

Since the beginning of the war Federal agencies and other groups concerned with the well-being of the children and youth of the Nation have developed plans to protect this reservoir of future manpower. These plans include the setting up of specific standards and policies for the participation of young people in meeting the labor needs of the Nation with due regard for the essential conservation of the health and educational opportunities of youth.

In February 1943 the War Manpower Commission issued a statement of national policy for the employment of boys and girls under 18 that should serve as a guide to all agencies, groups, and individuals interested both in promoting the welfare of youth and in augmenting the effective manpower of the Nation. This statement of policy^{*} recognizes not only that many young persons are needed in the labor force but also that careless and unsupervised use of youth power is a waste of the most precious resource of the Nation. It starts from the premise that the first responsibility and obligation of young people even in wartime is to take full advantage of their educational opportunities in order to prepare themselves for war and post-war services and for the duties of citizenship. It then proposes standards to insure that those who enter employment will make the maximum contribution to manpower needs consistent with the protection of their welfare.

In addition to emphasizing the need for observance of State and Federal laws, this statement of policy would establish 14 years as the age minimum for entrance to the hired labor force, 16 years as the age minimum for factory work, and 18 years as the age minimum for hazardous work. It would also set up safeguards for keeping youth in school and preventing excessive part-time employment and would

^{*} Statement of Policy on Employment of Youth Under 18 Years of Age. Reprint from *The Child*, March 1943. Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., 1943.

place special protection around all employment of boys and girls under 18 years of age.

Boys and girls 14 years of age or over in school, under this policy, should be employed during school hours only if the area or regional manpower director has determined that temporary labor requirements of an emergency character cannot be met by full use of other available sources of labor. They should be employed outside school hours only to the extent that school and work activities involve no undue strain, with a maximum limit of 8 hours a day for school and work combined, at least for those under 16. If school programs are adjusted to permit their employment, provision should be made for safeguarding the educational progress of both those who go to work and those who do not.

For boys and girls between 14 and 18 whose employment is essential to the war effort, it is pointed out that they should engage in work suitable to their age and strength, avoiding especially occupations hazardous or detrimental to their health or welfare. The maximum hours of labor standards specified for these young workers accord with those generally recognized as making for greatest efficiency for workers of all ages—a maximum 8-hour day and 6-day week, with certain specified deviations, and provision for lunch and rest periods. When the plans for their recruitment involve transportation to and from work, the total period of work and transportation should not exceed 10 hours a day. The protection of young workers from night employment is contemplated by a proposed limitation of employment to hours not detrimental to health and welfare.

As a measure of fairness, and to prevent employment of young workers as a means of lessening work opportunities for adults, this policy calls for paying young workers under 18 the same wages paid adults for similar job performance. Adequate facilities and safeguards for health and safety, and safe and adequate means of transportation whenever necessary to transport young persons to and from work, are also urged.

For work requiring the child to live away from home, the precautions proposed include: (1) no recruitment of children of 14 and 15 except in connection with programs of youth-serving agencies providing close supervision; (2) for minors under 18 recruited for agricultural work, provision of suitable living conditions, sanitary facilities, and health protection and supervision; and (3) contact with the United States Employment Service or such other agencies as may be designated by the War Manpower Commission by youth leaving home in search of work, to insure that a specific opening in a legal job is available in a locality where there are suitable housing arrangements.

In general, the broad outlines of this blueprint for national policy issued by the War Manpower Commission are in harmony with a number of guides outlined by other national groups. These include:

(1) Program of Action Adopted by the [Ninth National] Conference [on Labor Legislation], in *Résumé of the Proceedings of the Conference*.⁹

(2) Statement sent December 31, 1942, to State labor commissioners by Federal Departments concerned with labor and production (War, Navy, and Labor Departments, War Production Board, War Manpower Commission, Maritime Commission, and Office of Defense Transportation).¹⁰

(3) Statement of principles adopted by the Children's Bureau General Advisory Committee on Protection of Young Workers.¹⁰

For further assistance in dealing with employment of young persons under 18, State and local groups will find the following publications of the Children's Bureau useful:

(1) A Program of State Action developed by the Children's Bureau Commission on Children in Wartime, the Office of Civilian Defense, and the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services. A program dealing with all phases of child welfare in wartime.

(2) *Which Jobs For Young Workers?*, a series of advisory standards for employment of young workers under 18 in war industries; developed by the Children's Bureau with the advice of employers, labor groups, and organizations interested in safety. The standards point out types of work suitable for young workers in various war industries and types in which they should not be engaged because of special hazards.

(3) *Guides to Successful Employment of Non-Farm Youth in Wartime Agriculture*, prepared by the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, in consultation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Civilian Defense, Office of Education, War Manpower Commission, and the Children's Bureau Subcommittee on Young Workers in Wartime Agriculture, and approved by these agencies.

⁹ Obtainable from the Division of Labor Standards, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

¹⁰ Obtainable from the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.



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